Christian communions before their conversion to Roman Catholicism by John of Montecorvino. These, of course, had no more permanent influence than did Roman Catholicism and Nestorianism.

Islam fared better than Christianity. Moslems from abroad appear to have been much more numerous in China under the Mongols than were Christians. As we have seen, merchant communities of Moslem Arabs were found in several of the chief commercial cities. Much of the present Yunnan was governed by a Moslem official who had rendered notable service during the conquest of China, his son succeeded to his power, and descendants, still Moslem by faith, were prominent in China after the expulsion of the Mongols. It is not surprising that a large Mohammedan community arose in that region, for not only is it probable that Moslem troops were serving there under the banner of their co-religionist, but many of the inhabitants would be likely, from motives of expediency, to accept the faith of their governors. Nor is it strange that in North China, and particularly in what is now Kansu, where the overland trade routes from the West debouch, many Moslem immigrants were found. Neither is it remarkable that Moslem communities survived the downfall of the Mongols. Not only were they probably more numerous than the Christians, but the growth of Islam in Central Asia maintained a constant Moslem influence in China's Northwest, and the Arab control of much of the sea-borne commerce between Western, Southern, and Eastern Asia In the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries must have aided the persistence of Islam on the south coast.

Moslems had been in China before the Yuan, but from this dynasty dates their prominence in Chinese life.

CULTURE UNDER THE MONGOLS

As we saw at the beginning of this chapter, contact with foreigners and foreign civilizations under the Mongols was not followed by any such burst of cultural creativity as succeeded the introduction of Buddhism. Some effect the extensive contacts with aliens had, however: the Mongol period is different from the Sung and marked developments took place.

In mathematics and medicine innovations were made, due chiefly, apparently, to foreign contacts.